

2.2 Questions About Social Change



Psychological Questions

- Might look at social problems like solving problems with drinking and driving



Psychological Questions

- Focus on people's behaviours and attitudes
- What would psychologists attempt to investigate?
- Consider the individuals who have been convicted three times for driving while intoxicated

Psychological Questions

- The 5 year ban and the prison sentence that result from that conviction will perhaps protect society for some time
- But what happens after that?
- Can we design programs to change problems like this?

Psychological Questions

- What must people do to successfully change their behaviors?
- What factors make behavior modification programs successful?
- Do most people need help changing behavior, or can they be self changed?

Psychological Questions

- Much of this research involves the strong links between people's **attitudes (what they think) and behaviours (what they do)**.
- Psychologists have discovered that it can be difficult to change people's behaviours and attitudes

Psychological Questions

- Are friends more persuasive than strangers in changing people's attitudes?
- How effectively does the media mould and change our attitudes?
- If a society considers a behaviour to be unacceptable, and imposes penalties, are people then less likely to do it?

Psychological Questions

- Social Psychologists have discovered that most individuals desire **cognitive consistency**
- We want to avoid attitudes that conflict with each other, and we tend to live more satisfying lives when this is the case



Psychological Questions

- What makes us change our attitudes is the discomfort we experience when two attitudes conflict
- Most favored theory of attitude change is called **cognitive dissonance theory**.
- What you do conflicts with what you think.

Psychological Questions

- The only way you can effectively reduce dissonance is to do one of two things
- 1. Change your behaviour to make it consistent with your attitudes
- 2. Reinforce your attitudes

Sociological Questions

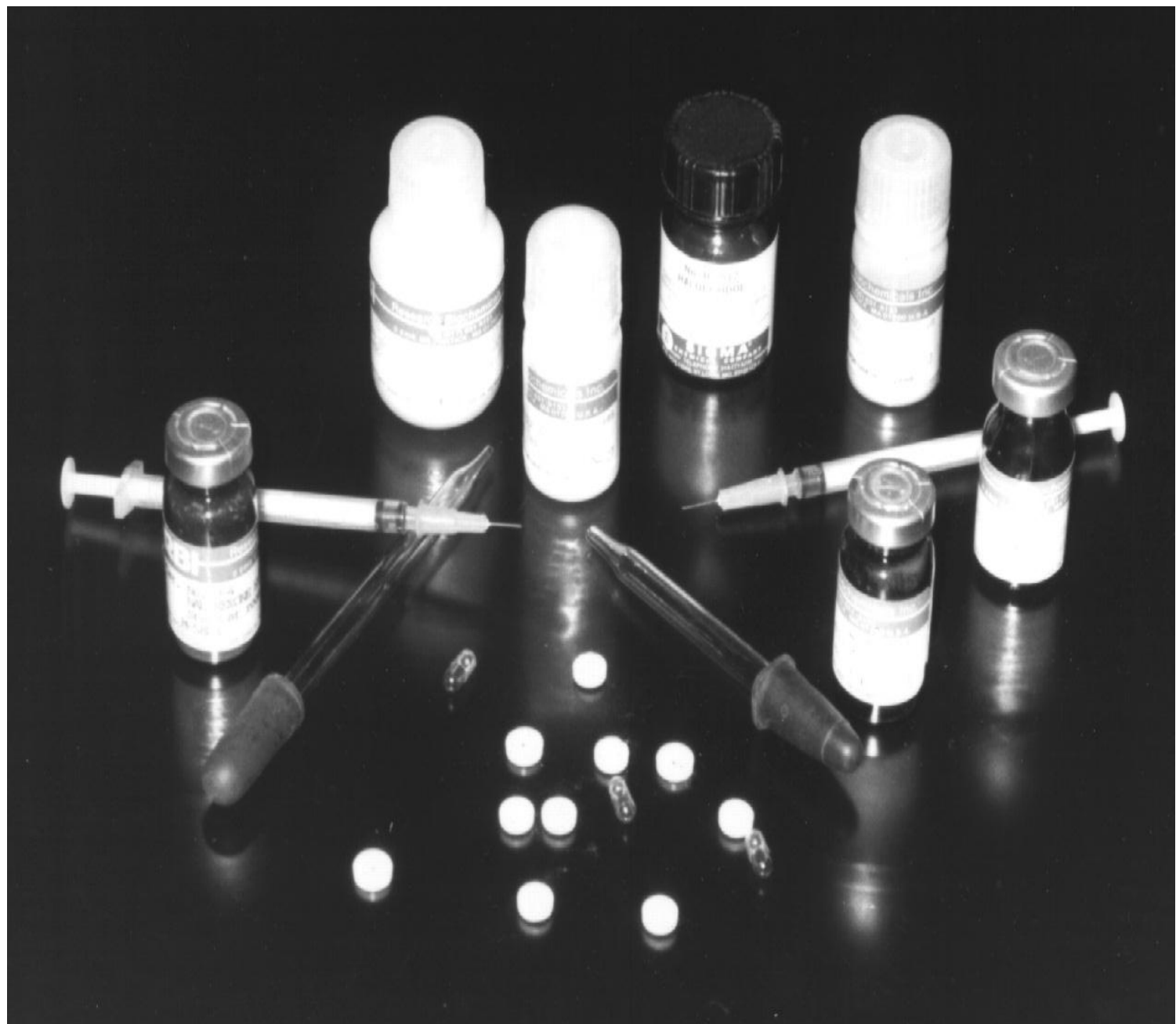
- Focus on massive shifts in the behaviours and attitudes of groups and whole societies.
- They see change as an inevitable process
- Major issue is whether social change is patterned and predictable or arbitrary and irregular

Sociological Questions

- Three main ways of explaining social change
 - Decay
 - Cycles of Growth and Decay
 - Progress

Decay

- Social change was seen as being caused by decline or degeneration.
- Adam and Eve
- As sociologists inevitably became more materialistic and less spiritual, they declined being less able to provide for and protect all their citizens



WHAT'S A LITTLE SIN UNDER THE **COVERS?**



DOG FASHION DISCO
ADULTERY

in *SEDUCTIVE* **COLOR**

FOR MATURE AUDIENCES ONLY



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Cycles of Growth and Decay

- Societies do not head inevitably toward destruction, but instead go through cycles of growth and decay

Progress

- Each new society builds on the experiences of its predecessors and social institutions change as a result



Analyzing Patterns of Behaviour

- People within societies tend to behave according to societal norms.
- Sociologists tend to look at one or more of four aspects of social change in their studies

1. Direction of Change

- Is it positive or negative?
- Who says so?

2. Rate of Change

- Is the degree of change slow, moderate or fast?
- Rapid change overnight or a change that will take decades to show?

3. Sources

- What factors are behind the influences of change in a society?
- **Exogenous** (coming from another society)
- **Endogenous** (coming from within the society)
- Technology

4. Controllability

- The degree in which social change can be controlled or engineered.
- Racism, smoking, spousal abuse